



**Testimony in support of Senate Bills 28/29  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
January 27, 2015**

Chairman Jones and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School is a student chapter of the national non-profit, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, an organization that works to protect and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. The Animal Legal Defense Fund has over 100,000 members and 200 law student chapters worldwide.

The Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School strongly supports SB 28/29 which will help put an end to deliberate cruelty and neglect against companion animals in Michigan.

Michigan's current animal cruelty statute (MCL 750.50 and 750.50b) penalizes acts of cruelty or neglect toward animals, but as written, the penalties for pet store cruelty, and cruelty in large-scale breeding facilities is extremely weak. By adding pet store operators and breeders to the category of those who must comply with anti-cruelty regulations, and by increasing the penalties for acts of cruelty to more than 25 animals, SB 28/29 will strengthen protections for animals in pet stores and breeding facilities, and decrease the likelihood of extreme neglect and hoarding situations.

In addition, research has consistently shown that individuals who exhibit patterns of cruelty to animals are more likely to perform acts of violence toward humans, such as spousal and child abuse. SB 28/29 increases penalties for those who knowingly harm an animal, and adds penalties for those who harm companion animals as a method for causing serious psychological abuse to the owner. By strengthening these penalties for deliberate animal abuse, SB 28/29 will allow law enforcement to better identify and target perpetrators who may not only pose a risk to animals, but to humans, as well.

SB 28/29 will increase protections for companion animals and help ensure that those who abuse or neglect animals within our state will be held accountable. It is for these reasons that the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School respectfully urges the Senate Judiciary Committee to support SB 28/29.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [prygoskia@cooley.edu](mailto:prygoskia@cooley.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alicia Prygoski, President  
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